

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, UK., EI

SUBJECT: PRESSURE TO END TERROR

REF: BELFAST 285

1. SUMMARY

CONSIDERABLE PRESS ATTENTION DIRECTED TO NORTHERN IRELAND OVER PAST WEEKEND. ISSUE IS SECURITY SITUATION WITH WOMEN'S ANTI-TERRORIST PEACE DEMONSTRATION BELFAST SHARING SPACE WITH ACCOUNTS OF PRESSURES FOR CHANGES IN GOVERNMENT SECURITY POLICY. PROVISIONAL IRA UNIMPRESSED BY NEW HOSTILITY TOWARD IT, AND VOWS TO CONTINUE "WAR." CONGEN DOES NOT BELIEVE GOVERNMENT CAN CAPITALIZE MILITARY ON ANTI-IRA SENTIMENT.

END SUMMARY.

2. METROPOLITAN PRESS OVER WEEKEND GAVE UNUSUAL AMOUNT OF COVERAGE TO NORTHERN IRELAND SITUATION, POSSIBLY BECAUSE UNCLASSIFIED

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OF PACITY OTHER NEWS. OBE OBJECT OF ATTENTION WAS WEST

BELFAST PEACE DEMONSTRATION AUGUST 14 BY BETWEEN 10 AND 12 THOUSAND PEOPLE, MOSTLY WOMEN. SPONTANEOUS NATURE OF PROTEST (REFTEL) WAS MAINTAINED WITH ONLY SIGNING OF PEACE PETITIONS ORGANIZED IN ADVANCE. MOST COMMENTATORS SEE "GLIMMER OF HOPE" FOR PEACE PARTICULARLY IN FACT DOZENS OF WOMEN FROM PROTESTANT WORKING-CLASS AREAS SUCH AS SHANKILL ROAD, EAST BELFAST AND BALLYGOMARTIN JOINED IN PROTEST RALLY AND MARCH. SOME CAME IN CHARTERED BUSES. REACTION IN WEST BELFAST, PARTICULARLY OF WOMEN, TO DEATH OF THREE YOUNG CHILDREN KILLED ON SIDEWALK BY CRASH OF STOLEN PROVISIONAL IRA GETAWAY CAR HAD EFFECT OF ENDING MOST STREET VIOLENCE IN AREA AUGUST 13. POPULAR DEMONSTRATION RECEIVED BOOST WHEN NATIONAL VICE PRESIDENT OF ANCIENT ORDER OF HIBERNIANS CALLED FOR IMMEDIATE END TO VIOLENCE AT ANNUAL RALLY AUGUST 14. SOME OF PUBLIC OPINION GAINS MAY HAVE ALREADY BEEN LOST BY INCIDENT SOUTH ARMAGH AUGUST 14 IN WHICH 12 YEAR OLD CATHOLIC GIRL SHOT AND KILLED IN CONFUSING CIRCUMSTANCES. ARMY CLAIMS SHE CAUGHT IN CROSS-FIRE WITH TERRORISTS BUT WITNESSES CLAIM ONLY ARMY FIRED SHOTS.

3. SECOND FOCUS FOR PRESS WAS PRESSURE ON GOVERNMENT FROM VARIOUS SOURCES TO CHANGE SECURITY POLICIES. THERE LITTLE AGREEMENT AND FEW SUGGESTIONS ON WHAT CHANGES SHOULD BE MADE HOWEVER. SUNDAY TIMES ARTICLE CLAIMED THERE SHARP AND DISTURBING DISAGREEMENTS BETWEEN ARMY AND GOVERNMENT OVER FUNDAMENTAL POLICY FOR DEALING WITH VIOLENCE. ACCORDING TO ARTICLE, ARMY SEES ALTERNATIVES AS REINTRODUCTION INTERNMENT, OR CHANGE RULES OF EVIDENCE TO PATTERN SIMILAR TO THAT FOLLOWED IN REPUBLIC WHERE TESTIMONY OF POLICE SUPERINTENDENT SUFFICIENT TO CONVICT ON MEMBERSHIP OF IRA. NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE STORMONT RELEASED STATEMENT LATE SUNDAY REASSERTING THAT ONLY RESTRAINT ON SECURITY FORCES WAS THAT THEY OPERATE WITHIN THE LAW. SUNDAY TIMES EDITORIAL MADE CASE THAT NOW IS NOT RPT NOT TIME TO MAKE CHANGES IN DIRECTION OF TOUGHER SECURITY POLICIES: "...THE PART IN THEM THE (IRISH) WHICH TOLERATES VIOLENCE COULD EASILY BE BROUGHT UPPERMOST AGAIN BY OFFICIAL HEAVY HANDEDNESS." SUNDAY OBSERVER EDITORIAL SAW OPPORTUNITY IN SITUATION FOR GREATER COOPERATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS ON SECURITY FRONT. EDITORIAL WONDERED WHETHER THERE A CHANCE OF ESTABLISHING A NORTH-SOUTH SECURITY COMMISSION TO OVERSEE EMERGENCY POWERS AND SUGGESTED ARMY WOULD EVENTUALLY HAVE TO UNCLASSIFIED

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CHALLENGE IRA GRIP ON WEST BELFAST AND LONDON DERRY GHETTOS. A NEW "OPERATION MOTORMAN" MIGHT BE FOLLOWED BY USE OF CONSPIRACY CHARGES, ACCORDING TO OBSERVER.

4. CONSERVATIVE SPOKESMAN AIREY NEAVE AND JOHN BIGGS-DAVISON ARE EXPECTED TO MEET WITH REPRESENTATIVES MOST ULSTER POLITICAL PARTIES THIS WEEK AND TO BE RECEIVED AT NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE. ULSTER POLITICIANS HOWEVER WILL PROBABLY NOT

PARTICIPATE WITH CONSERVATIVES IN JOINT APPROACH HMG.
ACCORDING TO HIS STATEMENTS NEAVE APPEARS CONVINCED THAT
PROVISIONAL IRA NOW AT LOW POINT AND, ALONG WITH OTHER
TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS, CAN BE CRUSHED. PROTESTANT FEELINGS
ARE RUNNING HIGH AND SIAPPROVAL OF SECRETARY OF STATE REES
IS WIDESPREAD. HOWEVER, MOST PROTESTANTS BLAME LABOUR GOVERNMENT
IN GENERAL AND CAN SUGGEST NO REPLACEMENT FOR MR. REES.
LOYALISTS CONVINCED GOVERNMENT "DID DEAL" WITH PROVISIONAL
IRA TO TRADE ARMY LOW PROFILE IN ULSTER FOR CESSATION
BOMBING IN BRITAIN.

5. FOR THEIR PART, PROVISIONALS BLAMED DEATH OF CHILDREN ON
BRITISH ARMY, VOWED TO CONTINUE "WAR" AND GAVE SEVERAL
DEMONSTRATIONS OF THEIR PRESENCE OVER THE WEEKEND. WOMEN AT
THE PEACE RALLY AND MARCH WERE HECKLED AND EVEN ASSAULTED BY
YOUTHS AND WOMEN WHO SUPPORT PROVISIONAL IRA AND PROVISIONAL
SINN FEIN. TWO SHOPS IN CENTER OF LURGAN BOMBED AUGUST 14,
HOTEL AT OMAGH AND FURNITURE WAREHOUSE IS BESSBROOK BURNED
OVER WEEKEND AND ARMY DEFUSED EIGHT INCENDIARY DEVICES AT BUS
DEPOT IN ARDOYNE. THERE WERE FEWER SHOOTING INCIDENTS OVER
WEEKEND BUT TOTAL FOR PAST WEEK PASSED 150, THE HIGHEST LEVEL
IN YEARS.

6. COMMENT: CONGEN AGREES THAT THERE "GLIMMR OF HOPE" IN
THE POPULAR DEMONSTRATIONS AGAINST VIOLENCE AND AGAINST THE
PROVISIONAL IRA. IT SHOULD BE NOTED HOWEVER, ANY MOVE BY
ARMY INTO MINORITY NEIGHBORHOODS IN SEARCH-ANDARREST OPERATIONS,
THE REINTRODUCTION OF INTERNMENT OR AN UPSURGE IN SECTARIAN
ASSASSINATIONS BY PROTESTANT TERRORISTS IN IMMEDIATE, PRACTICAL
TERMS, ANTI-IRA SENTIMENT CAN ONLY BE MEANINGFUL IF IT LEADS
PEOPLE TO GIVE INFORMATION AND TO TESTIFY IN TRIALS. HOWEVER,
UNLESS THIS REAL SENTIMENT CAN BE REINFORCED WITH GUARANTEES OF
PERSONAL SAFETY, RESIDENTS OF MINORITY AREAS WILL NOT DARE TO
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